

The Republican.

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DEATH OF RICHARD HASSELL.

A TASK, as untimely as it is painful, has devolved upon me, to announce to the readers of "The Republican," and to the late readers of "The Newgate Magazine," the death of Richard Hassell, of that R. H. whose articles in those publications gave promise of a bright and useful man. At the age of twenty-five, that extinction, which makes life scarcely worth the casual, painful and conditional endurance, has erased from among us this excellent young man. His first was his last illness. He completed his two years imprisonment and quitted Newgate in June last; but little injured in health by the confinement; and after a visit to his friends in Dorsetshire, he returned to town in July, apparently in perfect health. His employment from that time to the time of his illness was in the printing-office, reading proof-sheets, learning the art of typographical composition, and translating Dumarsais' Essay on Prejudices. During his imprisonment, he had acquired a knowledge of the French language, so as to be able to translate well: and arrangements were making to give him an opportunity to edit a newspaper. Nurture for his genius was abundantly supplied, and many friends, who knew him, were looking forward to a rich harvest.

Hassell was one of those village geniuses which rise above the clod-like brains of surrounding human beings, and continue to rise by reflections on the imperfections of others. His chief employment to the age of 22 was that of a carter to his father, who, though well able to afford it, had not given his son a common country school education. A horse and cart was entrusted to him as soon as he was able to direct it, and he long endured this life, much against his soaring disposition, until he visited me in Dorchester Gaol. There are some circumstances connected with that visit worthy of mention since Hassell has ceased to live.

He was known to the Gaoler, and on presenting himself at the Gaol Gate, was asked what he wanted of Carlile. His answer was prompt, honest, and simple—to ask him about the truth of the old religion! The Magistrates and Gaoler, at the end of three years, had ceased to turn away my visitors and Richard Hassell

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was admitted. I found him particularly intelligent for an unschooled young man of that neighbourhood, and that he had well digested such philosophical principles as the "Examiner" newspaper had afforded him. He avowed his thirst for knowledge, and I pledged him my utmost assistance. After a little acquaintance with my history and object, he expressed a strong desire to be employed in my shop for the purpose of a prosecution, which employment was promised him as soon as an opportunity should offer. A year elapsed without any prosecutions, he grew impatient to visit London and talked about setting out to embrace in town any kind of employment that might present itself. While preparing to act upon this resolution, the prosecutions of 1824 came on, and he hastened to make one of the number. He was in town but a few days before a prison enclosed him, and, at his trial, made a smart and original defence, which was published *verbatim* in "The Morning Chronicle," subsequently in "The Republican," and in the regular report of the trial. His sentence was two years imprisonment in Newgate, which he bore with manly fortitude, thinking of nothing but self improvement, and how he could make himself most publicly useful.

His articles in "The Republican," and in "The Newgate Magazine," shew the progressive state of his mind; and it has been observed of him by a competent judge, that he touched no subject without reasoning on it so as to shew its foundation. His essay on "The Immortality of the Soul," in an early Number of "The Newgate Magazine," was a masterpiece of the kind, and so far attracted attention as to sell off the *whole edition*. He had wit, beyond what he indulged, and some talent for making verses in rhyme; but his great quality was a clear style of metaphorical comparison and reasoning upon the most profound subjects. He had acquired a good knowledge of mathematics, and was a frequent correspondent in "The Mechanic's Magazine." In which, if, I mistake not, he projected a new method of taking the measurement of elevations by a new mode of mathematical calculation.

To sum up all that can be stated of Richard Hassell, it can be truly said, that he gave great promise of becoming a great man. His death was so far sudden, that though he had been confined to his bed several weeks, no one thought of his life being in danger, and, to me, the communication was a shock, as, at my last visit, I left him with an assurance that he was recovering. There was nothing apparently alarming in his illness. After the first visit, I found him cheerful and free from pain, though debilitated. A relapse of his fever came upon him on Tuesday the 7th instant, he became delirious and died on the Wednesday at midnight, or early in the morning of the 9th. Thus I have lost a friend, for whose advancement in knowledge and in life, I felt a great interest, and with reference to his past and late prospective utility, as a public writer, all mankind will share that loss.

He was buried on Monday the 13th inst. by his sister and her friends, in St. Clement Danes' Church Yard in the Strand, and thus made to form a part of that evil, which he lately so well exposed, as to lead to the probable immediate notice of the subject by the legislature—the *improper burial of dead bodies in the centre of a city*. Alas! for Richard Hassell.

RICHARD CARLILE.

November 16, 1826.

THE GODS; OR, THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS.

(In a Letter to a Friend in the Country.)

DEAR FRIEND, Tollington Park, Oct. 9, 1826.

I SEE clearly by the increased energy evinced in your letters, that your prejudices are rapidly dying away, and that your mind is become sufficiently strong and enlightened not to be shocked at the discussion of any subject, even though it should be on the existence of God. I therefore feel assured that I may, without fear of giving offence, submit to your consideration the conclusions which I have come to on that all-important subject.

Do not mistake me. Do not imagine that I wish to persuade myself that there is no God. Oh no! believe me, my friend, I have the most sincere desire to believe that there is one, feeling, from the distress and misery by which we are every way surrounded, that England never stood more in need of a just, wise, and beneficent God, than at the present moment.

I now address myself to my enquiries, and should I be able to discover a God, powerful, wise, and benevolent enough to restore my poor, starving countrymen to prosperity, peace, and happiness, by bringing about a more equal distribution of the necessities and comforts of life, no person in the world would rejoice more than myself.

When a ship is sent out from any country to seek undiscovered seas, and to explore unknown regions, the person who is appointed to direct her course, though he should never arrive at the object of his search, seldom fails to make such discoveries as may gratify the curiosity of his countrymen, which is one of the main objects of his mission. If he do not discover a new continent, he stumbles on a valuable island; and should he fail in this, by circumnavigating the globe, crossing and re-crossing the different oceans on its surface, and having intercourse with the people of various countries, he is enabled to add something to the sciences, and, by a narrative of his observations, to amuse and instruct mankind. So I have launched my little bark, not to circumnavigate the literary world, to cross and re-cross its oceans of con-

troversy, nor to examine and re-examine the mountains of evidence, the accumulation of a hundred ages, which has been adduced to prove the existence of God : but to endeavour to discover by the most simple means who and what that God is.

To trace out, also, in as clear and concise a manner as possible, some of the great revolutions that have taken place in the religious world, from the reign of Jupiter down to that of Jesus. In this bold attempt, although I may not be so happy as to come to a satisfactory conclusion about the first grand object of my enquiry, I may, like the circumnavigator in the foregoing supposed case of discovery, in my search after truth, make such discoveries as may afford materials for thinking, and open a field for speculation, wherein superior genius may exert its powers with greater success.

The name of Jupiter, the supreme Deity of the Pagan world, and more particularly the principal object of worship in the ancient states of Greece, is universally known ; and that bright and beautiful planet which graces and adorns the solar system, will prevent its ever being forgotten : but from whom he descended, and of what materials he was composed, are not so generally known ; I will, therefore, to make the thing as clear as possible, endeavour to trace out his origin, by giving him a regular genealogy.

Jupiter was the son of Saturn, who proved himself more like a monster than a God, by wishing to devour all his male children ; but in doing which, he was prevented by his son Jupiter, who deposed him for his monstrosity, and sent him packing into Italy, where he taught men husbandry.

Saturn was the son of Cœlum, who was castrated by his son Saturn, for what purpose I know not.

Cœlum was the son of Æther, the most ancient of all the Gods, who was air. And the Latin phrase, *Pater Æthereus*, of the ancients, meant, no doubt, FATHER AIR, in the same manner as we say *Mother Earth* !

Here, then, we have discovered, that the origin of the most ancient of the Gods was nothing more or less than the air we breathe personified, which personification was exalted to a God. Thus, an ideal object, created by poetical inspiration, furnished the design, sculptural ingenuity copied it on marble or brass, and lo ! the invisible God became visible, and the trade of the priest commenced. Nothing now was wanted but a suitable place from which the Almighty Thunderer might observe and regulate the affairs of the world. To accomplish this object, the brain of the poet was again set to work ; a Heaven was created, a throne was erected, and Mount Olympus, in Thessaly, the highest and most beautiful mountain in the world, became the residence of the Gods !

It was here, during the siege of Troy, that the great imperator

of Heaven held his court, formed his councils, and received and gave answers to the various petitions that were presented to him by the different parties, who felt deeply interested in that memorable siege. The particulars of this siege, and the conduct of the Gods and Goddesses, on the occasion, are they not written in the books of the *Iliad*, by the hand of the immortal Homer?

And here it was that the amorous Jupiter, in spite of the jealous vigilance of the beautiful and voluptuous Juno, assumed all manner of shapes, under which he carried on all sorts of intrigues, not only with the Goddesses of Heaven, but with the daughters of Earth. These amours lead to the discovery of the origin of a hero, whose name, during the last 1800 years, has struck terror and dismay into the souls of the inhabitants of the Christian world. The original name of this divine hero is *Lucifer*, which the Christians, by some unaccountable perversion of language, have translated into DEVIL! Nor was the changing of the name all; the Genius of Light was deposed, and the Demon of Darkness set up in its stead.

This Lucifer was the son of Jupiter and Aurora, or in plain language, he was the son of Air and Light, and was known among the ancients as the herald of day, the bright and beautiful har-binger of light.

At what precise period Jupiter was set up as an object of worship, or by whom he was created, I cannot discover, as there are various stories concerning his origin. One of these stories makes him the great grand-son of *Acmon*, King of the TITANS. I know not how to reconcile this tale with the circumstances of the case, since the Titans warred against heaven while Jupiter was a god; for he defeated and destroyed the TITAN kingdom for their rebellion against him.

The Titans were a colony from EGYPT, who settled in Greece, and were much superior in knowledge and civilization to the barbarous and idolatrous Greeks: and this warring against heaven was nothing, more or less, than opposing superior intellect to the customs, prejudices, and superstitions of the people of that age, in the same manner as *Carhile*, *Taylor*, and others, are warring against heaven at the present period; with this difference: the ancient *Titans* were destroyed; the modern *Titans* are likely to be triumphant.

If any thing were yet wanting to prove that Jupiter was originally nothing but Air personified, the circumstance of his being called the thunderer, the god of thunder, &c. would add considerable weight to the evidence already adduced, as it is well known, now, that air is the sole cause of thunder, and is, therefore, the true god of thunder, the real thunderer.

Many ignorant and superstitious people still retain the idea, that thunder is the immediate voice of God, and that he is always angry, or in a passion, whenever thunder is heard. These ideas

could never have got into the people's minds, had it not been the interest of their spiritual guides to obscure, and to distort the laws of nature, instead of investigating and explaining the motions and operations of matter which produce such phenomena as thunder, lightning, &c. Had the millionth part of the money which has been lavished on theologians, for misleading and bewildering the human mind with metaphysical phantasms, been spent in instructing the people in useful knowledge, knowledge, which must be acquired before either body or mind can be free, the meanest clown would have known, now, that thunder is not the voice of an intelligent god, nor lightning the fire of indignation! He would have known, that when two clouds, fraught with an unequal portion of electrical fluid, come near to each other, the cloud containing the greater quantity will discharge its superabundance into the other cloud, and with a flash of lightning restore the equilibrium; the environing air then violently rushing into the vacuum of the discharged cloud, causes that loud and sublime noise which is called thunder. He would have known, also, that the thunder of Mount Olympus was the same as the thunder of Mount Sinai; and that the thunder of Mount Sinai was the same as the thunder of Primrose Hill.

The same argument which I have made use of in the case of Jupiter Primus, may be used in the case of Jupiter Secundus, or Neptune. In this case, the water was personified; the personification was exalted to a Deity, the God of the Sea became an object of divine worship and temples were dedicated to the honour of his marble representative. If we examine all the mythological systems of the heathens, we shall find nothing but personifications and deifications in the objects of their worship. The ancients not only deified the elements, the sun, the moon, the stars, and their heroes, but almost every virtue, vice, passion, and sentiment, were personified into gods, goddesses, nymphs, or some other object of adoration. When I consider all these things as merely poetical inventions, I cannot withhold my admiration of the men who could create, give name, character, habitation, and assign offices to such an innumerable host of ideal beings, not one of which ever had an existence, but whose names shall be remembered as long as the arts of poetry, painting, and sculpture, shall continue to be cultivated.

My principal object, in taking up the pen to write this essay, was to endeavour to prove that matter in its elements existed before the most ancient of the gods, and that they proceeded from matter, instead of matter proceeding from them. This I have done, to my own satisfaction, as far as regards the heathen gods; I will now proceed to examine the great Jehovah, the God of the Jews, who is said to have created every thing out of nothing, instead of being part and parcel of matter as were his predecessors; but I contend, that even Jehovah is a being of human invention,

or rather an imitation of other gods. The exact time that he was set up as an object of worship it is difficult to discover; some writers have placed the event about 1491 years before the Christian era, or about 500 years after the Titans warred against heaven, and were defeated by Jupiter.

Upon the introduction of this new god, a mighty revolution took place in the laws of nature, every thing was attempted to be reversed; the gods, that were worshipped before Jehovah, had bodies, parts, and passions, and made a very active use of them, especially in their wars and amours; but the new god, the God of Moses, had neither arms, legs, tongue, eyes, mouth, ears, nor any kind of organization, yet he could speak more eloquently, write more correctly, and wield the sword more powerfully than any of the other gods, although they are represented to have enjoyed every necessary organ. This circumstance, as it well might, filled the world with wonder and admiration, and the people hailed, with acclamations of joy, the news of this grand spiritual phenomenon!

A new system of morals was now formed to correspond with the doctrines and revelations of this incomprehensible god! Every thing underwent a change; the persons who were ranked as sages and philosophers, before this spiritual revolution, were now considered idiots and fools; and those who were esteemed idiots and fools before were now exalted to the rank of doctors and metaphysicians! As the great Jehovah, or *pater nil*, created everything out of nothing, the shadow was made to command and to control the substance; positive evil was pronounced positive good; and war, rapine, and murder, became the leading features of the new religion!

Whenever, and wherever the armies of Israel assembled for war, whether in a just or unjust cause, Jehovah was always placed at the head, to issue out the order of the day. The orders, the decrees, and proclamations, are they not written in Numbers, chap. xxxi., and other parts of the Holy Bible? He was a military sovereign, and a conjuror, in every sense of the word. The camp of Israel was his throne; her sword his sceptre, and his march was on the wind. If we consider him in the character of a legislator, are his laws perfect? Are they superior to human enactments? If they are, why are human legislators necessary? Why do Parliaments meet annually to improve, or to repeal the laws of God! To discover the imperfections of an inspired legislator we have only to refer to Exodus, chap. xviii., beginning at the 13th verse, for there we may clearly perceive human reason triumph over divine inspiration.

If we consider Jehovah, in the character of a chief magistrate, what power does he possess to enforce the observance of his laws, and to punish crime according to its desert? To this question, the religious will reply, that he is both able to save

and to destroy; but the divine wisdom chooses sometimes to suffer the innocent to perish, that the cause of religion might triumph! On the other hand, the wicked are permitted to prosper for a reason that their fall might be the greater, and what shall I say? That the cause of hell might prevail?

Frightful policy! Detestable doctrine! This is upon a par with the conduct of the worst part of our police officers, who permit, and thereby encourage, petty thieves to go on their depredations, till they snap that link in the chain of the law which ensures to them the price of the blood of their victims! Did Vaughan, Brock, Pelham, and Powers, endeavour to draw innocent men into crime, and consequently into destruction, that justice might triumph? Horrible! If we consider the omnipotent in the character of a military chieftain the thing appears still more absurd, for how could armies be necessary to revenge the wrongs received by omnipotence? How could he, who could make worlds out of nothing, as fast as we could blow bubbles from soapsuds, need the aid of earthly powers? The fact is, the Jews were ashamed of their infamous atrocities, they, therefore, created a god to father their monstrous barbarities.*

But why do I dwell on these metaphysical absurdities, since whenever such principles are attempted to be established on earth they excite universal horror, and are universally condemned. The grand object of the priest of every religion is to conceal the weakness, and to exaggerate the power of his god; and nothing can effect the latter part of the object so effectually as making him a worker of miracles. This makes him superior to the operations and revolutions of matter which were constantly referred to by Jove, under the title of Fate; so that the ancient Jove was as much a fatalist as the modern Jupiter, Napoleon Buonaparte, a persuasion which is now attempted to be established by inferior mortals under the name of the doctrine of necessity.

Jove was not only governed by fate, but, on one occasion, and that a very brilliant one, even Juno, his wife, out-counselled him, turned his own thunder against his peculiar people (the Trojans), for Jove, like Jehovah, had his favourites, snatched from his hand the glories of Troy, and reduced to ashes the heaven-built city.

If Jove, who it is allowed was a material God, could be rendered so powerless when his desire must have been so strong, how can Jehovah, who is an immaterial god, be omnipotent? The alternate weakness and power of Jove are further proofs that he was what I have stated him to be, personified air. Just so is the action of the wind: sometimes it has power to tear up trees by the roots, force down the strongest buildings, and dis-

* This is saying rather too much for the Jews. They have nothing original or distinct about them as a nation or a people. — R. C.

perse and destroy the most powerful navies; and, at other times, it is found to be too weak to bear up a paper kite. And are not the same qualities observable in the character of Jehovah himself? When an earthquake swallows up a whole city, however innocent its inhabitants may be, do not his worshippers give the event the character of a judgment, and believe that it was achieved by the hand of their Almighty God? And yet this same Almighty God, at other times, is too weak, or too regardless, to save the poor devoted wretch, who is about to perish at the stake in the defence of the empire of the laws of heaven!

Having described and compared the qualities of the gods, let us now enquire a little about their names: first, let us see how the Latin word *Deus* is rendered into English. *Deus*, like almost every other word that alludes to any thing supernatural, is derived from the Greek language, and is defined as follows:—A god, a goddess, a genius, an oracle, an angel, a saint, a patron, a benefactor: so that, according to the Latin name, in plain language, God is any thing, and any thing is God. To support this *any* thing, or *no*-thing, during the last 4000 years, not less, but perhaps much more, than £400,000,000,000. in money, and other property, have been wrung from the sweat and blood of the labouring part of mankind! Beside the numberless tortures that have been inflicted on the human race: because they could not believe all that was set down in their creed, and were too honest to tell a lie! Millions upon millions of men, women, and children, during the above period, have been murdered in religious wars, to gratify the ambition and cupidity of successive and rapacious priesthoods, who carry humanity on their lips, and robbery and murder on their hearts.

Religion, now, is become a real speculative concern—a complete joint stock business. Half-a-dozen cunning, lazy fellows, get together: set on foot a subscription; dupes from all quarters come forward, a church, or a chapel springs up; the firm commences, and the congregation pay all, and receive nothing, whilst the half-dozen lazy fellows receive all and pay nothing. God, even in the minds of the religious, stands for nothing; or a man would not dare to do that in the sight of a God, which he would be ashamed to do in the presence of a baby.

From all these considerations, may we not hope, in the language of the prophet, and quoted by Mr. Wm. Allen, in his Lecture to the Students at Guy's Hospital, that the era is advancing, when "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea." Little did Mr. Allen think when he was delivering his lecture, that his knowledge of god would so soon be put to the test by the question—

WHAT IS GOD?

He is silent. I will speak for him. And the best way I can

do this, is to annex a copy of verses, which some how or other, came into my hands, by way of a marginal note.* The ancient Jews must have had notions something like those contained in the note below, when they first proposed to themselves to bring about the last grand theological revolution. They must have seen that their God was not explainable, that he could not be brought into any tangible shape; they therefore set themselves about connecting him with humanity. And this, at that period, was no very difficult task; for if it could be believed for 1500 years, that a being who could live in a box, created every object that the eye can behold, out of nothing, how easy it was, and how readily it must have been believed, that he could *overshadow a woman*, and beget a son!

A god of flesh and blood, body, parts and passions, was now set up as an object of worship: whilst the throne of Heaven was divided by three equal in command, equal in power, and equal in wisdom. This celestial triumvirate, it is believed, now governs and regulates the affairs of mankind. How we are governed, and provided for, let the poor, half-starved mechanics and labourers of this very religious country say. But they have said, and are still saying in petitions, not to the throne of the Gods, but to their fellow-men, that through bad government they are deprived of the common necessities of life; that they are poor, comfortless, and degraded; while their rulers loll in their gilded chariots, fare sumptuously every day, and put on gorgeous apparel, the produce of those whom they neglect and despise.

Now, my good Friend, although I have used great freedom in discussing my subject, I am not an Atheist.† I believe there is a God some where; and though I have not been able to discover him, somebody else may. Mr. Beard may; he is learned and eloquent. Tozer, who was neither, and Johannah Southcote, had

* You ask me, WHAT IS GOD? and I,
Am nowise puzzled to reply.
My inward lights so clearly shine,
That heavenly things I can define,
And can, though but a finite creature,
Tell what is God, and what is nature;
Whatever can be seen, and felt,
Whatever can be heard and smelt,
Whatever can be tasted, and
All that the mind can understand,
All that our wisdom can conceive,
All that in which we can believe,
All o'er which fancy ever trod,
Is Nature. All besides is God!
This solves at once the mighty riddle,
And breaks the metaphysic-fiddle,
On which the priest performs so clever,
And settles What is God for ever.

† An Atheist is a Theist. The only difference between them is the position of the letter *a* in the cognomen.—R. C.

almost made a God, or a God's second son, in spite of the thousand-eyed printing-press. No wonder, then, that the Grecians made Gods so easily before that almost omnipotent engine came into existence. By the bye, why is not the printing-press deified? If the thing is not immortal itself, it can and does give immortality to man. The printing-press, in the hands of Homer, would have been a God indeed; before such a God, as Homer would have made of it, even Jove himself would have shrunk into a nut-shell.

I wait with anxious solicitude the arrival of Christmas, hoping that Mr. Beard will not be long after the holidays before he publishes his *true God*! It ought to be dated the God of 1827. He will come just in time to assist the New Parliament in relieving the working-people of England from their intolerable burdens. Till then, the principle by which the vast machinery of the universe is kept in motion, and its motions regulated, is my God.*

Meantime, I remain, dear Friend,

Your faithful,

ALLEN DAVENPORT.

* What is that principle? or why is it a principle?—R. C.

ENQUIRY CONCERNING THE REALITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

To the Editor of "The Republican."

AFTER mature reflection and the exercise of the reasoning powers have divested the mind of the infantine prejudices of a Christian education, and the doctrines with which the mind had been impressed are shewn to be false, there will naturally arise an enquiry of an historical character—*Who or which was the person denominated Jesus Christ?* And we find, in fact, that conformably to what I have said above, the question, whether Christ be a fictitious character, or whether there really existed such a real person, has engaged the attention of sceptical philosophers, both of France and England, for many years past. Some contend, that Jesus Christ is wholly a fictitious being—representing, in the metaphorical language of the East, which the Greeks copied, the labours of the Sun: while others consider him to have been a real person, of a mystical character, who learned in Egypt the doctrines which he preached in Judea—in short, a Galilean carpenter's son, highly gifted with mysticism, with an Egyptian

education, of which he availed himself after the celebrated flight of Mary and Joseph into that country to avoid the wrath of Herod. For it is certain, whichever way we explain the problem of Christ's character, that both his doctrines, and the ceremonies afterwards adopted by the Church, were of Egyptian and Grecian origin, and agreed in many particulars with the religious observances of the Roman and Greek polytheists, which originated in astronomical emblems, misunderstood by the vulgar at a subsequent and less learned period. The learned researches of Dupuis, of Volney, and of Drummond, not to mention Jamblicus, and the Roman historians and mythologists, have not yet settled this question. The Christian history, which is another name for the History of the Catholic Church of Rome, cannot be authenticated much higher than the time of St. Cyprian. The Gospels were then in the hands of the priests of a Church which appears for some few years before to have had an organized existence; and a concerted plan seems to have been adopted of destroying three out of the seven then existing Gospels, and of keeping and canonizing four. Now, the same Councils of the Church who did this, might also have fabricated, or, at all events, much interpolated the written accounts of Christ. Previous to this period, however, that is, previous to the second age of the Church, we have collateral accounts of the Christians by Tacitus, Pliny, and other profane historians, but they do not sufficiently characterize Christ. Now, as I am collecting evidence on this subject, I shall be obliged to any of your many learned readers who will point out to me, through the medium of "The Republican," *what early writers have actually mentioned Christ himself*. My authorities already collected are insufficient to establish his real existence, in opposition to the opinion and arguments of Dupuis, in his *Origine des tous les Cultes*. While, on the other hand, they are enough to render that opinion doubtful, and to shake the argument on which it is founded, by its extensively learned but fanciful author. A pamphlet, entitled *Who was the Father of Jesus Christ*, was published some years ago at Norwich, by a Mr. Taylor, a believer in God Almighty, of that city, and who belonged nominally to the Unitarian junto—but it contained very little argument, and as it presumed that Jesus Christ *had a Father*, it proceeded on the *postulatum* of his real existence, which is the present subject of dispute.

Your's, &c.

O. O.

Nov. 14, 1826.

TO HERBERT MARSH, BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH.

MOST REVEREND SIR,
YOUR literary attainments are well known to be very great; you are not only well versed in the Classics, like your brethren, but you are distinguished for a thorough knowledge of the German language. On the memorable trial of the late Queen, you gave a proof that you were acquainted with the *niceties* and *delicacies* of that language, by your skilful examination of the German chambermaid.

But, if I mistake not, you wrote many years ago, a famous book in German, to demonstrate the *wisdom* and *necessity* of the war against French liberty; a mad and wicked war; the bitter fruits of which, the people of this country have long been tasting! Do not imagine that I am going to criticise on that work—I shall merely observe that as you were an ardent promoter of that war, your countrymen may, probably, soon think it reasonable, that you should participate with them in its ruinous consequences.

My object at present is, however, not to criminate you for your conduct on either of these occasions. I adduce those circumstances to shew that you, a Bishop of the Church of England, (as by law established) possess a thorough knowledge of the German language. It may, therefore, be taken for granted that you have looked, at least, into the German protestant Bible, if you have not read it through. Now you could not read the two first verses in it, without perceiving that it differs from the English version—and that circumstance would, doubtless, induce you to proceed further in the perusal of it, when you would find that there is scarcely a chapter to be met with, wherein two verses agree. In the beginning of our English Bible, it is said:—"the earth was *without form* and void." In the German, it is "*desolate* and void." In some places there is no sort of affinity between the two readings: in others, the variation is in different degrees until we come to the directly opposite. It is not for me to decide which is the genuine Bible of the two; but of this I am certain, both cannot be so. Then how is it, most Reverend Sir, that you, who are so competent to the task, have not furnished the Germans with a correct Bible, if theirs be wrong; or, if right, why have you not given your countrymen one that corresponds with it? You surely will not contend that it is immaterial whether we have a true or false translation of the original.

I do humbly opine that you would have been much better employed in settling this point, (and it would have been more to your honour as a Christian minister) than in exciting people to war and bloodshed.

There are several thousand places in our Bible, which differ from the German; and I am ready to furnish any bookseller with all the different readings, for a reasonable consideration. Our translation in the time of James the First, seems to have been a nice job. It is related that it was confided to fifty-six of the most learned men of both universities, and occupied three years in the completion. When it was completed it was submitted to another deputation of learned men, who spent nine months in the revision, receiving each thirty pounds a week for their trouble! after all, it seems to be a miserable translation, for it contains many sentences, particularly in the book of Job, which have no meaning at all.

How mortified the poor Wesleyan Methodist would be, after proving his doctrine of "perfection" by the English translation of that book, to find his proof completely nullified by the German one. "Job was a *perfect* and upright man," says the English; but according to the German he was "a *plain* upright man." I will just give you another instance to shew how beautifully these two protestant Bibles harmonize:—

Chap. vii. ver. 4. English, "When I lie down, I say, when shall I rise and the night be gone? And I am full of blessings to and fro unto the dawning day."

German. "When I lay down, I said, when shall I arise? And then I reckoned when it would be evening, for I was a fright to every one, till it became dark."

It will require, I think, not only *clerical* but *episcopal* ingenuity to reconcile these two readings. I have said above that there are sentences in *our* Bible without meaning, I therefore quote two instances to verify my assertion:—

Job chap. vi. ver. 16. "Which are blackish by reason of ice, and wherein the snow is hid."

The German says:—"They that are afraid of rime, upon them will the snow fall." This is quite intelligible.

Second, ver. 29. "Return, I pray you, let it not be iniquity: yea, return again, my righteousness is in it."

Which in German is:—"Answer what is right: my answer will still be right." This is sense again.

It would be encroaching too much on the pages of "The Republican" to adduce any further instances of this sort, and I therefore desist. The above are quite sufficient, I imagine, to rouse the attention of Protestants.

There is another subject which is very puzzling, and which I hope your Lordship will elucidate. In England, to the astonishment of foreigners—the strict observance of Sunday is rigidly enforced. It is said to be the height of wickedness to neglect it; and this doctrine is confirmed by the dying speeches of those Christian philosophers whose career is terminated by the gallows, unless their speeches are fabricated. "Oh, beware of Sabbath-

breaking," say they, "this was the source of our crimes, and which has brought us to an ignominious end." The priests say the same, and far be it from me to deny it; yet it is strange, that in countries, where *all* are Sabbath-breakers, there is not one tenth part of the crimes committed, that are committed in this religious, hymn-singing country.

But the point we are coming to, is this:—our late *religious* king issued proclamations enjoining, on pain of his high displeasure, a solemn observance, here, of the "lords' day"—and yet at the same time, the *Elector of Hanover* permitted the open violation of that day with impunity. I have seen peasants in Hanover, working in the fields on Sunday, and I have also seen these parties publicly and merrily dancing on the same day. How is it, thought I, that the King of England has so little influence on the Elector of Hanover, as not to prevent the commission of these damning sins; for such the former seemed to consider them. Is it, thought I, because they are of different religions; the king a Church of England man, and the *Elector* a Lutheran. Weary of conjectures, may I beg your lordship to explain, why the poor Hanoverians are suffered to run headlong to hell. You who know the German language so well, ought surely to have solemnly warned them, and all Germans, to abstain from that deadly sin; for they are notoriously a nation of Sabbath-breakers. Alas, alas! you, minister of the gospel of *peace*, preferred exciting the people to bloodshed, to publishing lectures on the "Lord's day."

OMICRON.

PETER ANNETT'S DEISTICAL LECTURES.

I HAVE not reprinted these Lectures; but I have bought a small edition that has been neatly reprinted by another bookseller. His price was seven shillings and sixpence; I strike off five shillings and sell them at two shillings and sixpence.

These Lectures are in demy octavo, and will bind well with my publications of that size. I have also a few copies of Gilbert Wakefield's Essay on Inspiration at 1s. 6d.

R. C.

LINES ON THE DEATH OF RICHARD HASSELL.

" Say, why should Lords our praises all engross ?"

POPE.

NATURE, capricious Goddess of all life !
How mighty, but how tyrannous thy reign !
Oft with the brave and virtuous at strife,
Too soon thou bidst them swell thy heaps of slain.

Early thou quenchest the ethereal flame
Of minds that cherish and illumine our earth ;
While slaves and tyrants live their age of shame,
To goad the heart of genius and of worth.

Blooms there in the eternal fields of thought
A flower of promise ? ere the world hath seen
Its beauty, or its balmy fragrance caught,
'Tis number'd with fair visions that *have been*.

Breathes there an ardent spirit that doth dare
To live for lovely Truth's immortal good ?
O churlish Nature ! thou too oft art there
To blast with flame, or quench in whelming flood.

Our Shelley perish'd in thy fatal deeps—
Our Byron by thy pestilential ire—
And virtue, though of humbler name, now sleeps
For ever, murder'd by thy baleful fire !

What though the silver clarion of Renown
Tell not of HASSELL to the cold world's ear ?
Warm hearts he lacketh not, whose pulse shall crown
With Friendship's honest obsequies his bier.

True pilgrim he at Freedom's holy fane—
True worshipper of Truth's effulgent beams !
Nor quail'd his spirit at the despot's chain,
The hypocrite's vile lore, the bigot's dreams.

Rich was the vernal promise of his heart,
Whose loss fond kindred mourn with fruitless tears ;
But froward Fate hath play'd her reckless part,
And stol'n the bright summer of his years.

Farewell, ingenuous one—no tuneful Gray
For thee awakens his melodious lyre !
No laureate pours for thee the lofty lay,
As when the proudly diadem'd expire.

Yet dost thou not resign the " cheerful day"
Unwept, unhonoured—Memory builds thy shrine
In bosoms true to love and friendship's sway !
And O ! accept a lowly lay like mine.

W. RANCE.

LINES WRITTEN AFTER WITNESSING RICHARD
HASSELL'S FUNERAL.

All that's bright must fade,
The brightest, still the fleetest.

MOORE.

He's gone ! And vitality's spark is for ever
Departed from him whom we mark'd for our own ;
His pulse has ceas'd beating ; his bright mind will never
Instruct nor delight us again. He is gone.
“ They have toll'd his death-bell, they have laid the earth
o'er him,”

His bright eye was glazed, no aid could restore him,
His breath is departed ; the good will deplore him,
And the friends who have lov'd him, his loss will bemoan.

His eye, with the bright light of genius was beaming,
But the pale hue of sickness had spread o'er his cheek ;
His mind with the mild fire of science was gleaming,
His intellect strong, though his body was weak :
To the cause of mankind, all his time was devoted,
His hatred to falsehood his works have denoted,
Truth, Justice, and Reason, he always promoted,
His thoughts and his feelings, he ever would speak.

But now he's departed, and we who remaining
Do mourn his removal, and weep his decease ;
We will dry up our tears, and his mem'ry retaining,
Will walk in his footsteps, nor give ourselves ease,
Till we become tenants of death's gloomy dwelling,
From the crafts that oppress us, their false lights dispelling ;
And justice from man to his fellows compelling,
That reason may triumph, with freedom and peace.

Then, shade of dear Hassell, thy mates left behind thee,
 Thy words will observe, thy example retain :
 Thy objects pursuing, for well do we mind thee,
 'Twas freedom for man thou didst strive to obtain :
 The fool'ries of priestcraft already are dying,
 The mists of delusion are rapidly flying,
 And we thy companions most fervently trying,
 Our tyrants to crush, and our rights to obtain.

W. V. H.

Nov. 13, 1826.

INFERNAL CRUELTY OF CHRISTIANS TOWARDS WOMEN.

Nunquam aliud Natura aliud sapientia dixit.

It has long been a matter of surprise to me, that no popular writers in this reforming age have noticed and duly exposed the disgraceful manner in which women are treated in most Christian countries. In England, they are hardly treated like rational beings; and though in Germany, Holland, and the north of Europe, they are somewhat more respected; yet their condition even in those countries is far from what humanity demands of the more powerful sex in the behalf of the weaker. I shall confine my observations however principally to the state of the female sex in this country, where the grossest inconsistencies prevail in regard to women, and where the most extravagant and cruel notions, about the virtue of female chastity, are coupled with the grossest assaults on common decency and on the moral character and even on the personal comfort of our women. However novel this assertion may be, I pledge myself in the sequel of this paper to make it out clearly to be true. And I assert, moreover, that women are better treated in Turkey than they are in England, at least, by a large class of society: not that I say the assertion applies universally, for this country can boast, at least, of very numerous, good, and enlightened men.

As one of the most prominent examples of my doctrine, I shall instance the notions and practices of Christian Europe with regard to what is commonly called *female chastity*. A female is distinguished by the epithet of *modest* who has not violated her

marriage-vows ; who has not committed fornication in the unmarried state ; and who has not been detected in any of those indecencies, nor manifested any of that indelicacy of conduct which would lead either directly or indirectly to fornication. And she is distinguished by the epithet modest in contrariety to one who has committed all or any of these acts, and who is therefore called an immodest woman, and is, in consequence, worse treated than many species of swindlers and thieves are ! She is hunted down and scouted by her own sex, and by men ; and is driven from one act of immodesty to another, till at last she ends her life in a gaol, a gin-shop, or a hospital, despised, vilified, insulted, and in almost every way ill-used by those who have contributed to render her what she is unhappily become, both by previously being instrumental to her seduction, and by afterwards shutting her out from the society of women called modest, because their oppressors still contrive to keep and appropriate them to themselves. The state of London streets, the foul-wards of our hospitals, and the daily newspapers, all confirm not only the truth of what I assert, but the magnitude and extent of the evil over nearly the whole country. Such a state of female degradation does not exist in Turkey.

Now I ask, what right has a man, in the first place, so to *distinguish modest from immodest women*, as to appropriate the former to himself, and to abuse and vilify the latter ; while he himself commits the same actions as the *most immodest women* do, without incurring the same disgrace and misery, and without suffering from the same *distinction* from some few men who *do not* commit such actions ? The vulgar proverb, that *what is sauce for the goose, is sauce for the gander*, is strictly and justly applicable to men and women in the case of what is called fornication. And it is only because Christianity is more hypocritical than Mohammedanism, that Christians in England and Germany do those acts of promiscuous sexual intercourse clandestinely, which Mohammedans do openly ; and that in the west of Europe, secret brothels are substituted for the public seraglios of the East. I am not in the least degree advocating the cause of female incontinence : on the contrary, I assert, that the moral laws of society ought to encourage virtue in both sexes ; but I distinctly assert, that the same actions which are reprobated in a woman, cannot consistently be overlooked in a man, who must of necessity be a *particeps criminis* in all actions of a sexual nature which can be called crimes. A man who enters his neighbour's house and surreptitiously seduces his wife, is a character more odious and dangerous to society than a girl who innocently indulges, without deceit or fraud, those passions which Nature has given her for the special purpose of being gratified. But when it is considered, that men are usually the prompters and the causes of such female indiscretions, and that the men who commit the most offensive

acts of this sort are received in society, while the females are shamefully excluded, and rendered thereby the objects of insult—when, I repeat, all these things are considered, and when it is considered, also, that it is in Christian countries alone that these abuses and inconsistencies exist, it must appear evident, that there exists some radical defect in the laws and customs relating to the intercourse of the sexes, which distinguish Christian from other countries.

That *jealousy*, and not Christianity, has made the marriage-laws and the customs respecting women, I admit, as too obvious a truth to be overlooked; nor should I object to the operation of jealousy in the appropriation of one woman to one man, as a rational means of social happiness, if only jealousy were allowed, in practice, to operate *equally on both sides*. But where custom sanctions the infraction of certain laws on one side, and punishes it on the other, it is high time to investigate the validity of these laws, of which such a partial and unjust infraction can be tolerated. Now, I assert, that nearly all the laws and customs respecting marriage, adultery, and fornication, in all Christian countries, are radically defective, though their deficiency is a flea-bite to the gross and partial infraction of them which custom tolerates in one sex exclusively. Schlegel, in his “Dramatic Literature,” ascribes the high estimation in which female modesty is held in Christian countries to the doctrine of the immaculate conception, and the Virgin Mother of God. And I believe the truth is, that selfish Christians have availed themselves of this circumstance, as a means, by idolizing female chastity, to secure to themselves the appropriation of wives at the suggestions of jealousy, while they, being the more powerful, allow themselves an unlimited indulgence in promiscuous intercourse, when prompted by desire. As a remedy for all the above-described evils, I should propose the following as an amendment in the laws regarding the sexes:—

1. That the simple declaration of nuptials before a magistrate should constitute a marriage.
2. That mutual declaration of a wish to separate, after a year's previous notice, should be available as a divorce.
3. That civil actions for damages in adultery be abolished: and that the proved wanton endeavour to seduce a man's wife should be punishable, if it succeeded, in common law.
4. That all children clearly proved to belong to any man or woman, should be supported by them, or by their legal heirs, and that the word bastard should be abolished.

And, lastly, That all religion, and religious authority, and ceremonies, should be henceforth done away with, in all and every ceremony relating to marriage and divorce.

Christianity in this, as in every other instance, has become a cloak for the vice, and a medium of oppression. Christians, in

their jealousy, forget what the idol of their adoration said to the woman caught in adultery. Christians may build Penitentiary Houses, found Magdalen Hospitals, and other foundling asylums, to cloak their crimes, to excuse their want of duty to their natural offspring, or to bribe the Lord : but Asiatics do without these things, because, however enslaved, they treat their women kindly.

Your's, &c.

GYNOPHILUS.

Nov. 9, 1826.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE REPUBLICAN."

SIR,

Bristol, Nov. 7, 1826.

IN my former communication, I endeavoured to shew, that on theological principles, if there ever was a being called God, who created the universe, he must have created it from nothing. We can form no idea of existence without space; and that as God himself could not exist independant of it they are both coeval, and self-existent. The creation, if we are to credit the Mosaic account, took place near 6000 years ago. If this be correct, millions of ages would be less than a grain of sand to the ocean shore, to express the time that deity existed before *that* creation took place. Will it be said, that God dwelt solitarily in the boundless expanse during those numberless ages? or was he creating other systems that we know nothing about? These are difficult points, which we must leave to the defenders of the system; perhaps they have given us the best definitions they could by asserting that "God is a spirit:" in other words, he is nothing that we have any knowledge of, and we must "worship, in spirit and in truth," we know not what.

Spirit, in theology, may be compared to motion in the universe: both are applicable to the life of man, when motion ceases man becomes a lifeless clod; his brains, the seat of his understanding, die with him and perish, and all the ideas we form of man beyond *that* are imaginary. The change of form does not destroy motion; all nature ever was, and ever will be, in motion; the form changes, but the substance abides for ever. To suppose the necessity of a Being to create and govern the universe, is a multiplication of cause to no purpose, and in this way we may proceed "ad infinitum." We can form no idea of a being creating unlimited space, nor existing without it, nor can we conceive how this earth we live on "was without form and void." "A very common mind will perceive, from a little reflection, that

a great many of the terms and phrases in ordinary use are as near akin to perfect nonsense as can well be: chaos in its common use and acceptation, was far from philosophical, for it meant a jumble of all sorts of elements, principles, rudiments, and ingredients in one rude mass. To fill the common-place notion of a chaos, we have only to suppose this pleasant world of ours, with all it contains, and with all it abounds, put into a large mortar, and after being pounded and mixed by the youngest apprentice of a Hottentot apothecary, made up into one immense bolus, this would be chaos in the common acceptation of the word; but it is quite certain it would not then be utterly shapeless, for it must have a surface, and that surface would either be curved or straight lined; in short, it would still possess the three great essentials of all created things, form, colour, and texture."

Is it not an idea more transcendantly grand to suppose nature performing its self-moving revolutions in the immensity of space, independant of an auxiliary support, by the force and regularity of its own laws and inherent power, than to receive the unintelligible and inconsistent jargon of a tyrant, who commenced his career with assassination, and carried it on by a system of cruelty intermixed with debauchery? To believe in chimeras we do not understand; to believe the worlds and systems we behold were created by fits and starts, as we erect churches, towers, palaces, canals, and water falls; what is this but reducing the formation of the universe to our narrow views of mechanism, and confining the rolling of the ocean, the blowing of the winds, the direction of the rays of the sun, the violence of the rain, placing all, like an army, under the word of command, and which, if admitted, are sometimes exemplified by horrid devastation that would dreadfully libel the character of a wise and benevolent being?

But theology is so fenced with Scriptures and Creeds, that its advocates can overcome all difficulties; facts, however strong, must give way to creeds and religious dogmas, and human miseries are metamorphosed into physical evils, for the purpose of curing moral evils; and when enveloped in the thickest darkness, a supply of texts, which is ready at every emergency, introduced as a quietus, such as "his councils are hid in the secret pavilions," and "his ways are past finding out;" and true it is, that which is hid cannot be found out, and equally true, that it can be of no sort of use to those who cannot find it. Still, if this be objected, the objector is sometimes asked, if he can form a better system, to which we can only answer in the negative, we do not pretend to possess those attributes which they ascribe to their Deity; but if perfect wisdom and benevolence are his properties, and he is the sovereign ruler of this our world, is it unreasonable to expect the government to correspond with the attributes of the governor? When we find it completely at variance

with those attributes, and incalculable miseries constantly calling loudly for benevolence without relief, can we help exclaiming with Wanley Penson—"O, maker of man, did I but possess thy powers of benevolence, I envy not thy other attributes!"

Is it unfair to expect that perfect wisdom would set up just and equitable rulers in the world he governs? Would omnipotence suffer a perpetual system of tyranny and oppression to prevail to desolate his handy work? Would the few be permitted to riot in luxury, while the many were in want of the common necessities of life? Would cruel law-suits be permitted daily to oppress the needy, by the overwhelming influence of the rich? Would the widow and orphan be suffered to be plundered by the rapacious grasp of those appointed as their protectors? Would nations be allowed to keep up standing armies, to protect rulers in burthening the people with excessive taxation—and allow them to enact vexatious laws, and *ex officio* informations, to entrap and destroy all who may have the courage to complain? Would inhuman inquisitions have been allowed to torment innocent victims for worshipping (according to the best of their judgment) the God who is said to rule and protect them? Can the government of a wise and benevolent being be associated with such infernal villany? Can we indulge the thought, that a perfect omnipotent being (who it is asserted) would destroy worlds by his mighty fiat, would have been a silent spectator of *auto da fe's*, the burning of innocent men, women and children, who conscientiously worshipped him? Is there an English soldier to be found whose sword would not have been instantly drawn in defence of such injured innocents? Could a better proof of his fatherly care have been exhibited, would it not have been more efficacious than ten millions of sermons, or the eloquence of millions of well paid priests and missionaries? Surely, the summary punishment of such blood thirsty tyrants, would have spoken more than thousands of Bibles, or all the theological books that were ever published; yet, as prevention is better than cure, and the power equal to both, the former would have been unquestionably preferable.

How shall we unite wisdom and benevolence with the lingering and miserable existence of idiots and madmen, and with the incurable diseases to which the best of human beings are subject; and with the overwhelming rich benefices of the few, while thousands of families with the willing labour of their hands are unable to procure the common wants of life?

These are a small portion of the evils that manifestly exist, and shall we continue to pay a multitude of men to insult our common sense, by telling us that all this is consistent with wisdom, power and benevolence? Would they not be far more usefully employed by instructing the ignorant as to the best means of lessening the evils of human life? There is much more wisdom

in relieving the needy with food, raiment and useful knowledge, than of giving them weekly lectures on imaginary theories, which are unconnected with their present existence, and of which no human being can give any tangible proof. The very record on which all depends, when analyzed, is contrary to known facts and replete with inconsistencies. The judicious lecturer, whom I have quoted, "regretted that men in general were not more alive to the advantages of science, and that the well-intentioned people who subscribed so largely to the Bible, Missionary and Peace Societies, did not appear to see that they might exercise both their benevolence and their piety, by aiding the cause of science. I know (he adds) I run some risk in touching on the subject at all. If I may be allowed to ask, I should say, what is the end and aim of these expensive objects? The well being of mankind; in a word, *morality*. What does morality consist in? Not in holding certain opinions of faith, but in those acts and contrivances by which the condition of mankind is bettered, by which the compact of brotherly love is strengthened, by which the good and kindly qualities are called into action, and made to operate in a constant interchange of good offices.—This is morality; and the elements of this morality are most certainly to be found in science: in these scientific contrivances, by which man has been enabled to lighten the weight of what may be well called the original curse, barbarism and ignorance. Science is the basis of philosophy—philosophy embraces all knowledge—knowledge is the most sure means of happiness—and happiness the end and object of man's creation."

E. K. D.

ECCLESIASTICAL ESTABLISHMENTS.

(Concluded from p. 576.)

Who would have sent abroad such a report? The appearance of another pamphlet by Woolston, exaggerating on the necessity of his allegorical view by exhibiting as strongly as in his power the absurdity, as it appeared to him, of regarding the miracles as matters of fact, so inflamed the spirit of persecution, that the proceedings against him could no longer be stayed. And the case of Woolston has formed the leading precedent for punishing, as a crime, freedom of writing on religion, from that to the present time.

We can hardly anticipate that the clergy will seek, on this occasion, to save themselves by the poor pretext, that what was done by the government was not done by them. One of the

boasted uses of such a church as ours, "who lifts her mitred front in courts and palaces," is, that she has power to obtain acts of this kind from the government; acts which she denominates services to religion, and which are services of that kind which was rendered to Jesus by his servant Peter, when he drew his sword, and cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest. If it be good to prosecute, the clergy would be inexcusable if they were not themselves the prime agents of prosecution. If it is bad, why do they not prevent it? Would the government go the length of a single act to stifle the voice of freedom in religion, were it known to be contrary to the inclinations of the church? We shall therefore proceed upon it as an undoubted fact, that all prosecutions on the score of religion are prosecutions by the church, and that the reverend the judges are on such occasions the mere mouth-pieces of the reverend the clergy.

Let us now take a slight cognition of the progeny, which the priest begets upon the judge; that monster, half cant, half grim-gribber, which the man on the bench brings forth, when he lends himself to crush the freedom of writing in matters of religion.

The *King v. Woolston* is treated by the lawyers as a leading case.* It was moved in arrest of judgment; that the offence was not punishable in the temporal courts. But the judges declared they would not suffer this point to be argued—mark the reason—"for the Christian religion is established in this kingdom: and therefore they would not allow any books to be written which would tend to alter that establishment." If the worship of Moloch were established, this rule would hold equally good. Truth and utility are tossed out of doors, that good lodging may be preserved for the Church. Establishment, Establishment, is the word. What it is that is established, true or false, good or evil, is wholly out of the question.

The court added, "that Christianity was part of the law; that whatever derided Christianity derided therefore the law, and was an offence against the law." This reason is just the same as the former; it is merely a fresh form of words to say that Christianity is established, and that the mere fact of establishment is a proper ground for punishing every human being that calls in question the truth or goodness of the established matter.

We have here a case of that fraudulent use of language, of which we detected so many instances in a short passage of Blackstone, and with which the law language of England abounds beyond all example, and all belief. "The law," in its large and general acceptation means, the whole body of the securities provided for our persons, our properties, and all that is dear to us. The man that by derision, or any thing else, tries to destroy or

* Holt, Law of Libel, 67.

weaken the force of these securities, is the greatest of criminals. "The law," however, has another meaning. It may be any "part or parcel" of the whole body of enactments; and it may be a part and parcel which not only does not aid the general means of security, but tends with all its force to impair them. To seek to cut off this cause of infirmity or hurtfulness in the law, either by argument or ridicule, is so far from an offence against the law, in its more general acceptation, that the whole tendency of it is to strengthen and improve the law. The knavery of the lawyer, acting with its usual tool, a juggling, equivocating term, makes this admirable service, which is an attack upon "the law," in one sense of the term, namely a peccant part, parcel, or pendicle of the law, be construed and taken for what it is not—an attempt to deprive society of the benefits of law.

Thus fraudulent and worthless is that pretext for punishing freedom of speech, which is wrapt up in the canting jargon, that Christianity is part and parcel of the law of England. Observe too the sweeping operation of the *dictum*. If nothing which is part and parcel of the law is to be free to the press, nothing is free. In respect to other things, freedom of the press is a word without a meaning; if the press is not free, in respect to government and religion, it is not free at all. Mark well that in the destruction of religious freedom, that of all other freedom is involved.

It was urged in the defence, that the opinion expressed by Woolston neither was, nor was intended to be, an attack upon Christianity. But the court said, that "the attacking of Christianity in the way in which it was attacked in this book, was destroying the very foundation of it: and though there were professions in the book, that the design of it was to establish Christianity upon a true bottom, by considering these narratives in scripture as emblematical and prophetical, these professions were not to be credited, and the rule is, *allegatio contra factum non est admittenda*."

This deserves to be carefully marked. The question was, in which of two senses, the accounts of the miracles in the New Testament were to be received. According to Woolston the ordinary acceptation was wrong and injurious to Christianity. The court affirmed, that his was wrong, and subversive of Christianity. By what title? This was a matter of opinion, which the court took upon itself to decide by the mere word of a despot. Where had the court learned to be infallible in theology? Nor was this all. The court took upon itself to determine and declare, that the author was a liar; his professions not to be believed. Upon what evidence? We intreat you, reader, to mark the evidence. It is a curious specimen of the process by which judges can fix guilt upon any man whom it is their interest to destroy. *Allegatio contra factum non est admittenda*: "Professions are not to

be admitted against the fact." What fact? Here was only one fact, namely, that of writing a certain opinion about the miracles. Woolston made no professions against that fact; he fully admitted it. He professed that he did no injury to Christianity. The court affirmed that he did; but this was matter of opinion, not fact. Here, therefore, was no *allegatio contra factum*, and the ground for the affirmation of the falsehood of Woolston being worthless, the affirmation of it by the judges was criminal in the highest degree.

Lord Raymond, Chief Justice, in delivering the opinion of the court said, "I would have it taken notice of, that we do not meddle with any differences in opinion; and that we interfere only where the very root of Christianity is struck at." This is accurate language; is it not? well calculated to let men precisely know, what they are, and are not, to be punished for. "We do not meddle with differences in opinion." Wholly untrue. In the case of religious libels, they meddle with nothing else. The "root" of Christianity: what part of Christianity is that? And how is a man to know when he is "striking" at the "root," rather than the trunk, or some of the branches!

The proceeding here requires some developement. The court, after laying down, and acting upon narrow maxims, which not merely restrict liberty but destroy it, comes out with a declaration, vague, indeed, and uncertain in its meaning, but on the face of it importing a large liberty. This, you will say, is contradictory, and highly absurd. That is true; nothing can be more so. Yet it is not here only, but in many other parts of the law, that the judges have provided themselves with maxims similarly contradictory. We have on a former occasion observed, in politics, the great use, to fraudulent purposes, of the see-saw. In judicature, there is still a greater use, for the purposes of judges, in contradictory maxims. In whatever part of the field of law the judges can lay down contradictory maxims, they are despotic, and may do what they please. Let us put a broad case for illustration. Suppose they had two maxims. 1. "It is good to punish a thief."—2. "All men who commit theft, for their own benefit, and not purely for the sake of hurt to their neighbour, may go unpunished." With these maxims, if they had them, it is evident, the judges might in every case punish, or not punish, just as they pleased. So in the case of the liberty of the press; it is good to have a set of maxims by which every thing may be punished, and also a set of maxims by which every thing may be exempted from punishment: because, then, judges may do what they please, or their employers please. Thus, it is exceedingly important to have a maxim, "Let the liberty of the press be sacred." By this every thing may be exempted from punishment. It is equally important to another maxim, "Let the licentiousness of the press be prevented." By this every

thing may be punished. It is important to have one maxim, "We meddle not with differences of opinion." By this, every thing be exempt. It is also important to have another maxim, "Christianity is part and parcel of the law of the land." By this, every atom of difference from the opinion of the church of England may be punished: thus the Athanasian creed is part and parcel of the law of the land; the thirty-nine articles are part and parcel of the law of the land, articles where all the nice and disputable points are carefully collected, and the opinions, which shall be true by ordinance of law, presented for the legal faith and conscience of all the subjects of the realm.

From the time of this prosecution, till the French revolution, which produced a state of mind highly favourable to the bent of the clergy, there was but little scope for employing the powers of law to crush freedom of printing on the subject of religion. The spirit of the age would not bear prosecution of the dissenters, for such heresies as they indulge in; and with respect to infidelity, or opinions unfavourable to Christianity in general, the situation of the clergy was somewhat perplexing. It was chiefly men of rank, or writers of very high reputation, who questioned in their works the pretensions of Christianity; lord Shaftesbury, for instance, lord Bolingbroke, lord Chesterfield, lord Kaimes, Mr. Hume, Mr. Gibbon, Adam Smith; and with a formidable enemy the clergy are commonly well inclined to avoid a dispute. It is also true that, during the fifty years which preceded the French revolution, infidelity in the higher circles was a species of fashion. Among the *beau monde* in France it was universal; and they at that time gave the tone to the leading classes in the rest of Europe. It is not a secret, how Christianity was regarded by the highest men, both in the state and the law, in England, during the time of which we are speaking.* To excite prosecution for writing freely on the subject of religion, was attended with some hazard in these circumstances. And the fact is observable, that men, feeling themselves pretty much at liberty to declare their thoughts, made very little use of that liberty, the question appearing to be decided in the minds of those for whom almost exclusively at that time books were written; for it is since the French revolution, mostly, that the body of the people have become readers, and that men of talent have thought

* Warburton's testimony to this fact will probably be held sufficient evidence. "Indeed," says he, in his dedication to the Freethinkers, "were it my design, in the manner of modern dedications, to look out for powerful protectors, I do not know where I could sooner find them, than amongst the gentlemen of your denomination! for nothing, I believe, strikes the serious observer with more surprise, in this age of novelties, than that strange propensity to infidelity, so visible in men of almost every condition; amongst whom the advocates of Deism are received with all the applause due to the inventors of the arts of life, or the deliverers of oppressed and injured nations."

it an object worthy of their ambition to prepare works for their instruction.

Though powers of law had thus dropped out of the hands of the clergy, their unabated rancour towards the liberty of the press does not the less certainly appear. Passages without end might be quoted from their sermons and other writings, in which they complain, in the bitterest terms, that such and such writings are permitted to appear, and that the writers of them are not punished; often denouncing the vengeance of God against the nation, for thus permitting his word to be denied. But we shall omit these illustrations, and proceed to what we reckon one of the most atrocious manifestations of the spirit of the clergy: we mean, their disposition to blacken the character of those who hold opinions different from theirs; to defame their morals, to make them be regarded, as first vicious, next unbelievers, and unbelievers solely in consequence of their vices. Such has been the course pursued not merely by the declaimers, those who could calumniate, though they could not reason; it has been adopted, we will say disgracefully adopted, which shews how deeply roots of the poisonous tree have struck, by the very greatest and best men of whom the church has to boast; men of great powers and of great virtues, Berkeley for instance, Clarke, Tillotson, Barrow, and others.

Berkeley is not ashamed to set up as representative of the class of unbelievers, a minute philosopher, as he nicknames him, who formally and deliberately preaches wickedness, and denies absolutely the obligations of morality. "LYSICLES. Men of narrow capacities and short sight, being able to see no further than one link in a chain of consequences, are shocked at small evils which attend upon vice. But those who can enlarge their view, and look through a long series of events, may behold happiness resulting from vice, and good springing out of evil in a thousand instances. To prove my point I shall not trouble you with authorities or far-fetched arguments, but bring you to plain matter of fact. Do but take a view of each particular vice, and trace it over its effects and consequences, and then you will clearly perceive the advantage it brings to the public." He then goes over the several vices of drunkenness, gaming, highway robbery, whoredom; and at last declares to his companion, "Thus, in our dialect, a vicious man is a man of pleasure; a sharper is one that plays the whole game; a lady is said to have an affair, a gentleman to be a gallant, a rogue in business to be one that knows the world. By this means we have no such things as sots, debauchees, whores, rogues, or the like, in the *beau monde*, who may enjoy their vices without incurring disagreeable appellations. EUPHRANOR. Vice then is, it seems, a fine thing with an ugly name. LYSICLES. Be assured it is."*

* Minute Philosopher, Dial. ii.

This is vulgar defamation, mere mendacious calumny. But it is also something infinitely worse. It was well known that there were men with minds prepared to believe the odious tale, men with whom it would stand in the place of all argument: men who would be sure to consider the opinions of wicked persons, as wicked opinions; not requiring to be repelled by the arguments of the divine, but stifled by the hands of the gaoler, or hangmen.

The fact is, that many of the writers unfavourable to Christianity have been men of eminent virtue, and distinguished by their ardent endeavours to strengthen the ties of morality among mankind. We mention this as a matter of history merely, without founding upon it any inference with regard to the tendency of the religious opinions, either of them or their opponents. Hobbes in this country and Bayle on the continent, not to speak of others, will stand a comparison with the best and greatest men that have ever lived: and if infidel writers, as a class, be compared with other classes, of what class, not even excepting the clerical, can it be affirmed with truth, that its character for morality stands higher than theirs? Nothing, therefore, can exceed the baseness of the clergy in taking the advantage which the prepossessions of the vulgar afford them, by assuming that it is a vicious life which engenders reasonings and conclusions unfavourable to religion. To bear down an adversary, not by refuting his bad arguments, but defaming his good life, is a course worthy not of the best, but the worst of causes; and all sincere Christians ought to unite as one man, to clear themselves of so deep a stain.

Berkeley does not stop short till he has told the world that the employment of infidels is, to recommend even the most atrocious crimes. "An unlucky accident now and then befalls an ingenious man. The minute philosopher Magirus, being desirous to benefit the public, by calculating an estate possessed by a near relation who had not the heart to spend it, soon convinced himself upon these principles, that it would be a very worthy action to dispatch out of the way such a useless fellow, to whom he was next heir. But for this laudable attempt, he had the misfortune to be hanged by an under-bred judge and jury."

He would have forgotten a most important weapon against the infidels if he had not imputed to them political as well as moral wickedness. Their representative is thus made to boast: "We have cleared the land of all prejudices towards government or constitution, and made them fly like other phantasms before the light of reason and good sense. Men who think deeply cannot see any reason why power should not change hands as well as property; or why the fashion of a government should not be changed as easy as that of a garment. The perpetual circulating and revolving of wealth and power, no matter through what or whose hands, is that which keeps up life and

spirit in a State. Those who are even slightly read in our philosophy, know that of all prejudices, the silliest is an attachment to forms. CRITO. To say no more upon so clear a point, the overturning a government may be justified upon the same principles as the burning a town, would produce parallel effects, and equally contribute to the public good." And after a few sentences *Lysicles* affirms, "Laws and regulations to right and wrong, crimes and duties, serve to bind weak minds, and keep the vulgar in awe; but no sooner doth a true genius arise, but he breaks his way to greatness through all the trammels of duty, conscience, religion, law; to all which he sheweth himself infinitely superior."

And this is given as a true representation of the speculative opinions, and practical principles, in morals and politics, of all who question the divine origin of Christianity!

We had intended to have exhibited specimens of the same spirit of honest representation and fair dealing, on the part of other divines of the greatest eminence, but Berkeley's passages have tempted us so far, that we must now content ourselves with a reference to what we intended to insert from Archbishop Tillotson, and Drs. Barrow and Clarke. In Tillotson the reader may find what will suffice for evidence in the sermons lxxxviii. and lxxxix., intituled, "Honesty the best Preservative against dangerous Mistakes in Religion;" in sermon ccxlv. intituled, "The Excellency and Universality of the Christian Religion;" and sermon ccxlvii., intituled, "The Ground of Bad Men's Enmity to the Truth." For the same purpose we refer him, in Barrow, to the sermon "On Infidelity," towards the end, and to the second sermon "On Faith." The only specimen which we think it necessary to adduce of the spirit in the writings of Dr. Clarke, is near the beginning of his work on "The Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion," where, immediately following the statement of the fifteen propositions, which he undertakes to establish, he gives an account of the several sorts of Deists.

When men, not only of such powers of reasoning, but of so much true virtue and moderation, make assumptions thus groundless and indignant, they afford evidence against the body, by the spirit of which they are carried so directly against the current of their own nature, infinitely stronger than what is furnished by the railings of such a man as Warburton, who proceeds upon it as a legitimate *postulatum*, that if there be any man who holds one opinion different from any opinion of Warburton, such man is a wretch, and has no one good quality, either moral or intellectual, about him.

The following, which is a small touch of his hand, will exemplify his mode of dealing with the infidels. It is Cardan, the mention of whom produces the following decent effusion:—"The charming picture he (Cardan) draws of himself, and which he excuses no otherwise than by laying the fault on his stars, will

hardly prejudice any one in favour of his opinions." Warburton, we see, knew the effect produced upon the credit of doctrines by the opinion which might be spread of the character of him who maintained them; and with this knowledge, he gives out the following as the character of the infidel. "How far it (Cardan's picture of himself) resembles any other of the brotherhood, they best know who have examined the genius of modern infidelity. However, thus he speaks of his own amiable turn of mind:—'*In diem viventem, nugacem, religionis contemptorem, injuriæ illatæ memorem, invidum, tristem, insidiatorem, proditorem, magum, incantatorem, suorum osorem, turpi libidini deditum, solitarium inamœnum, austerum, sponte etiam divinantem, zelotypum, obscœnum, lascivum, maledicum, varium, ancipitem, impurum, calumniatorem,*' &c. We have had many *free-thinkers*, but few such free-speakers. But though these sort of writers are not used to give us so *direct* a picture of themselves, yet it hath been observed, that they have unawares copied from their own tempers, in the ungracious drawings they have made of human nature and religion."*

Free-thinkers are a "class, who never cultivate a truth, but in order to graft a lie upon it."†

And this is the style in which Warburton indulges himself, as often as his discourse brings an infidel before him, from the beginning to the end of his very vulgar volumes, vulgar in every thing, vulgar in language, vulgar in tone and temper, vulgar even in learning, for which he has got a most undue reputation, but most of all vulgar in reasoning, of which he understands not even the elements; for we doubt if an aggregate of bad reasonings, a match for his, exists in the writings of any other man, that ever put pen to paper.

We have now exceeded the limits to which an article ought to run, and yet have only reached two of the evils to which the fatal measure of incorporating a body of clergy gives birth: persecution on account of religion, and hostility to the liberty of the press. The developement of its further effects in depraving both religion and morality, in corrupting education and government, in retarding the progress of the human mind, and in degrading the character, intellectual and moral, of the clergy, we shall undertake on some future occasion.

* Divine Legation, b. i. § 3.

† Ib. b. iii. § 6.